

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present Amendment and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18 are pending. In the present Amendment, Claims 1-9 are currently amended and new Claims 10-18 are added. Support for the present amendment can be found in the original specification, for example, at page 7, lines 13-18, at page 8, lines 18-27, at page 10, lines 6-11, at page 10, line 18 to page 11, line 25, at page 12, lines 1-17, and in Figures 1-8. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Claims 1, 2, 9/1 and 9/2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Schneider et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,206,243, hereinafter “Schneider”); Claims 3 and 9/3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ichikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,126,315, hereinafter “Ichikawa”); Claims 4/1 and 4/2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Schneider in view of Shimada et al. (Japanese Patent Publication No. 2001-072030, hereinafter “Shimada”); and Claim 4/3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ichikawa in view of Shimada.

Initially, it is noted that the claims are hereby amended to no longer be in multiple dependent form. Further, it is noted that Claims 2 and 3, which were previously independent claims, are hereby rewritten as dependent claims that depend on Claim 1.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, it is noted that the claims are hereby amended to clearly be directed to a single statutory class. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1-3 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Turning now to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections and traverse these rejections, as discussed below.

Independent Claim 1 recites a method of preparing a self-supporting bag that comprises folding a main body of the self-supporting bag such that the bottom portion is parallel to the body portion and the self-supporting bag is flat. The method also comprises “maintaining the folded self-supporting bag by standing up both side portions of the main body in a width direction, including the body portion and the bottom portion, such that the self-supporting bag is not flat.” Accordingly, as can be seen in the exemplary embodiment shown in Figure 8, the folded state of the self-supporting bag can be maintained by standing up both side portions of the body portion and the bottom portion in a width direction and applying an L-shaped folding habit to both side portions.¹ It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest every feature recited in amended Claim 1.

Schneider describes a spray bottle 12 including a collapsible container 14 for holding a liquid.² The spray bottle 26a shown in Figure 6A of Schneider includes a collapsible container 56a having a bottom wall 80a that appears to collapse inward.³

However, it is respectfully submitted that Schneider does not disclose or suggest “maintaining the folded self-supporting bag by standing up both side portions of the main body in a width direction, including the body portion and the bottom portion, such that the self-supporting bag is not flat,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Instead, Schneider merely describes that the collapsible container 56 can be flattened, and does not describe how to maintain the collapsed state of the container 56. Thus, Schneider does not disclose or suggest maintaining the folded state of the container 56 by

¹ See the original specification, for example, at page 12, lines 9-17.

² See Schneider, at column 2, lines 33-38 and in Figure 1.

³ See Schneider, at column 4, lines 41-67 and in Figure 6A.

standing up both side portions of the main body in a width direction such that the container 56 is not flat.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Schneider does not disclose or suggest every feature recited in independent Claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 1, and all claims dependent thereon, as anticipated by Schneider be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 3 and 9/3 as anticipated by Ichikawa, as discussed above, Claim 3 is hereby amended to depend on Claim 1. Further, Ichikawa describes a liquid container 1 having lower edges 9a, 9b, and 9c that protrude outward before the container 1 is filled with liquid.⁴ However, Ichikawa does not disclose or suggest maintaining the folded state of the container 1 before it is filled with liquid by standing up side portions of the container 1 such that the container 1 is no longer flat. Accordingly, Ichikawa does not cure the above-noted deficiencies of Schneider with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of dependent Claim 3 as anticipated by Ichikawa be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejections of Claim 4, it is noted that Claim 4 is hereby amended to depend only on Claim 1. Further, it is respectfully submitted that Shimada does not cure the above-noted deficiencies of Schneider with respect to Claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the cited combinations of Ichikawa in view of Shimada and Schneider in view of Shimada do not disclose or suggest every feature cited in amended Claim 4. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of Claim 4 be withdrawn.

New Claims 10-18 are added by the present amendment. Support for new Claims 10-18 can be found in the original specification, for example, at page 10, lines 6-11, at page 10, line 18 to page 11, line 25, at page 12, lines 1-17, and in Figures 1-8. Further, it is

⁴ See Ichikawa, at column 4, line 66 to column 5, line 4 and in Figure 4.

respectfully submitted that Claims 10-18 correspond to the elected species shown in Figures 1-8 and thus should be given a full and thorough examination on the merits.

Additionally, it is noted that Claims 10-17 depend on Claim 1, and thus are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1.

Further, new Claim 12 recites that “the maintaining includes standing up both of the side portions of the main body in the width direction such that the side portions extend in a direction perpendicular to a central portion of the main body.” In view of the above discussion of the cited references, it is respectfully submitted that none of the references, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest standing up both side portions of the main body such that the side portions extend in a direction perpendicular to a central portion of the main body. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 12 further patentably defines over the cited references.

Regarding Claim 13, it is noted that new Claim 13 recites “filling the self-supporting bag with a component via the charging portion; and after the filling, sealing the charging portion via heat sealing or ultrasonic sealing.” It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest every feature recited in Claim 13. Thus, it is respectfully submitted Claim 13 further patentably defines over the cited references.

Regarding Claim 14, it is noted that new Claim 14 depends on Claim 13 in addition to reciting “pouring the component from the self-supporting bag via a pouring port that is separate from the charging portion.” Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 14 also patentably defines over the cited references.

New Claim 17 recites that “the maintaining means includes a hot melt on the bottom portion and the hot melt adheres a first side of the bottom portion to a second side of the bottom portion.” It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest using a hot melt as a maintaining means to hold a first side of the bottom portion to a

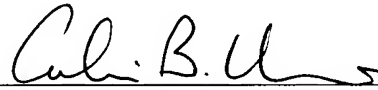
second side of the bottom portion. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 17 further patentably defines over the cited references.

New Claim 18 is an independent claim that recites a method of preparing a self-supporting bag comprising “maintaining the folded self-supporting bag by standing up both side portions of the main body in a width direction, including the body portion and the bottom portion, such that the support bag is not flat.” Accordingly, in view of the above discussion with respect to Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest every feature recited in new independent Claim 18.

Consequently, in view of the present Amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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